NBII Metadata Training Workshops

The National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) <http://www.nbii.gov/> is a cooperative effort coordinated by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) <http://www.usgs.gov/> that is dedicated to increasing access to biological data and information. One way to measure NBII success is by the ease with which users can identify and share the biological data and information products maintained by the USGS and our partners in federal, state, and local government agencies; private sector organizations; and other organizations around the nation and the world.

Through the NBII Clearinghouse <http://www.nbii.gov/clearinghouse.html>, Internet users can search through a wide assortment of standardized descriptions or metadata of biological databases or information products to identify those that meet their requirements. These metadata concisely convey such things as subject matter; how, when, where, and by whom the data were collected; how to access the database or information product; and person(s) to contact for more information.

For the most effective searching and retrieval of information from the NBII Clearinghouse, Clearinghouse metadata must be created according to established guidelines. The USGS now offers NBII metadata training workshops to ensure metadata creators are familiar with basic concepts related to creating metadata. Workshops provide an opportunity to create metadata through hands-on exercises, prepare metadata files to be served on the Clearinghouse, and retrieve metadata records from the Clearinghouse.

NBII metadata workshops use the NBII Biological Metadata Profile, which incorporates all elements of the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata and adds elements that specifically describe biological data. Training is provided on MetaMaker, a Windows application designed to aid in the capture of metadata information into a standardized format. MetaMaker was developed by the USGS and is available to users at no cost through the NBII at <http://www.nbii.gov/metamaker/metamaker.html>.

NBII metadata workshops normally cover eight topics. Here are summaries of each:

Metadata and Clearinghouse Concepts: Covers basic information about metadata and clearinghouses, how they are used, and their benefits. Also introduces the NBII Biological Metadata Profile and the FGDC Metadata Standard.

NBII/FGDC Metadata Structure: Introduces the 10 sections of the NBII/FGDC metadata standard; templates; elements and hierarchical structure; domain information; and mandatory, mandatory if applicable, and optional elements.

MetaMaker Operation: Familiarizes attendees with MetaMaker software, including the main menu and general MetaMaker functions such as pick lists, data entry, and navigation.

NBII/FGDC Metadata Content: Provides an in-depth look at each section of the

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NBII/FGDC metadata standard using sample data sets and entering metadata information into MetaMaker.

CNS (Chew-N-Spit) Operation: Covers the details regarding processing metadata, reading the associated error files, making corrections, and verifying a clean metadata record (the CNS metadata verification program corrects errors in a metadata record).

MP (Metadata Parser) Operation: Describes how to run MP, read the leftovers file, and use the output files (MP processes metadata in preparation to being served on a clearinghouse).

Clearinghouse Use: Describes the NBII Clearinghouse and the National Spatial Data Infrastructure Clearinghouse. Participants gain insights on serving, locating, and retrieving Clearinghouse metadata records.

Metadata Development and Consistency: In the workshop's concluding unit, participants refine and strengthen their newly acquired skills. Case study approach provides key concepts that help ensure the quality of an organization's metadata.

NBII metadata training workshops are open to all federal, state, and local agencies; museums; universities; private organizations; and other potential data sharers. The workshops are conducted at locations across the country, based on participant interests and requirements. The workshops usually take two days, but condensed workshops are also possible.

The host site normally provides local logistical assistance, including: confirming the training room and computers and assisting with participant recruitment and workshop registration. Typically, workshop participants are not charged for attending the workshop or any materials distributed during the class.

Interested participants are encouraged to contact the NBII metadata training workshop coordinator for information about upcoming NBII workshops in your area or possibilities for tailoring a workshop to your office or agency needs.

For more information, please contact:

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